

Yatahoney Creek Wilderness Study Area

1. The Study Area -- 9,990 acres

The Yatahoney Creek WSA (ID-16-49D) is located in Owyhee County about 100 miles south of Boise, Idaho. The WSA includes 9,990 acres of BLM land and a 40 acre, private inholding (see Table 1).

Seventy-six percent of the WSA is bounded by primitive dirt roads and a gas pipeline while the remainder is bounded by legal subdivisions along nonfederal land and along public lands judged not to have wilderness values. One cherry-stem road (1.3 miles) enters the southeastern portion of the area. The WSA is bounded on the north by the Battle Creek WSA (ID-111-49E), on the west by the Owyhee River-Deep Creek WSA (ID-16-49A) and on the south by the Juniper Creek WSA (ID-16-52).

The WSA consists of a flat to hilly sagebrush-, bitterbrush- and bunchgrass-covered plateau dissected by 55 miles of canyons including 29 miles of the East Fork Owyhee River. The canyons are up to 600 feet deep, narrow and meandering. Portions of the canyons that are not sheer-walled are covered with sagebrush and bunchgrasses while the riparian area consists of a narrow band of lush grasses, rushes and sedges.

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) and was included in the Owyhee Canyonlands Wilderness Environmental Impact Statement filed in October 1989. Four alternatives were analyzed in the EIS for this WSA: a partial wilderness alternative where 440 acres would be released for nonwilderness uses, which is the recommendation of this report; a partial wilderness alternative where 2,000 acres would be designated as wilderness and 7,990 acres would be released for nonwilderness uses; an all wilderness alternative; and a no wilderness alternative where about 2,600 acres would be included in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Systems as a portion of a larger wild river area.

2. Recommendation and Rationale

9,550 acres recommended for wilderness

440 acres recommended for nonwilderness

The recommendation for the Yatahoney Creek WSA is to designate 9,550 acres as wilderness and release 440 acres for other uses. The environmentally preferable alternative is the all wilderness alternative. It would cause the least change from the natural environment over the long term. The recommendation would use all practical means to avoid or minimize adverse environmental impacts.

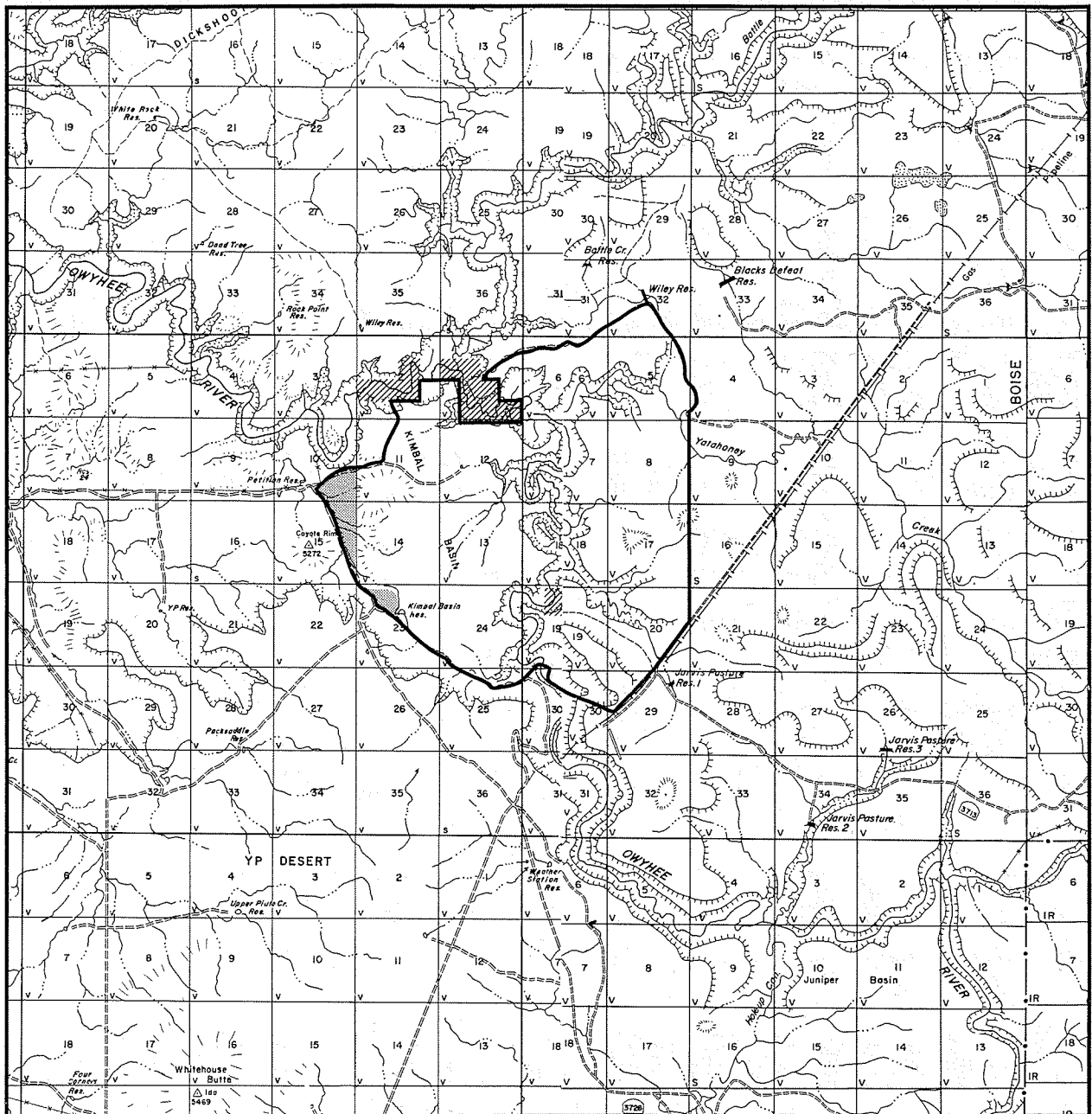
The 9,550 acres recommended for wilderness designation are shown as the nonshaded area on the Yatahoney Creek Proposal map. This recommendation would further apply to a 40 acre, privately owned inholding and to 160 acres of private land between this WSA and adjoining WSA ID-16-49A if acquired through purchase or exchange with willing owners. Appendix I lists all nonfederal lands within the area recommended for wilderness and provides additional information on acquisition of these lands.

The 9,550 acres recommended for wilderness designation would enhance the National Wilderness Preservation System through the addition of 13 miles of spectacularly scenic canyon and 7,550 acres of surrounding plateau. The area is natural in appearance, has outstanding opportunities for solitude and for primitive and unconfined recreation, and offers significant special features. The area is manageable to protect wilderness characteristics. The 9,550 acres recommended for designation are part of a proposed 385,080 acre Owyhee Canyonlands Wilderness which would include about 270 miles of desert canyon, 164 miles of whitewater boating opportunities and 292,640 acres of plateau.

The 440 acres of BLM recommended for release for nonwilderness uses are shown as Areas A and B on the Yatahoney Creek WSA map. These areas are not recommended for wilderness designation:

AREA A: Paiute Basin -- 320 acres of plateau along the western boundary of the WSA contains a large livestock water reservoir. The area's wilderness characteristics of naturalness and primitive recreation are low when compared to the 9,500 acres recommended for wilderness designation. Locating the wilderness boundary atop a low ridgeline to the east would provide a more protectable boundary allowing better control of motor vehicles.







AREA B: El Paso Gas Pipeline boundary -- 120 acres of canyon and plateau along the southeast boundary of the WSA not recommended for wilderness designation to allow for utility corridor (underground facilities only) along the existing El Paso Gas Pipeline right-of-way. The utility corridor was identified through BLM's planning process.

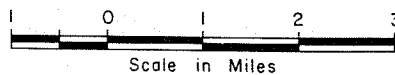


R.2 W.

R.2 W. | R.1 W.

R.1 W. | R.1 E

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|--------------|
|  | RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS |  | SPLIT ESTATE |
|  | RECOMMENDED FOR NONWILDERNESS |  | STATE |
|  | LAND OUTSIDE WSA RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS |  | PRIVATE |



ID-16-49D
YATAHONEY CREEK
PROPOSAL

DECEMBER 1988

T. 13 S.

T. 14 S.

T. 14 S.

T. 15 S.

**Table 1 -- Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area
YATAHONEY CREEK WSA**

Within Wilderness Study Area

BLM (surface and subsurface)	9,990
Split Estate (BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings (state, private)	40
Total	10,030

Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary

BLM (within WSA)	9,550
BLM (outside WSA)	0
Split Estate (within WSA)	0
Split Estate (outside WSA)	0
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness	9,550
Inholdings (state, private) ¹	200
State land (outside WSA)	0

Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness

BLM	440
Split Estate	0
Total BLM Land Not Recommended for Wilderness	440
Inholdings (state, private)	0

¹Appendix I is a detailed description of inholdings included within the area recommended for designation.

3. Criteria Considered in Developing the Wilderness Recommendations

Wilderness Characteristics

A. Naturalness

The Yatahoney Creek WSA consists of a plateau dissected by 13 miles of 400- to 500-foot deep canyons. Wildlife within the WSA includes California bighorn sheep, mule deer, pronghorn, mountain lion, bobcat, coyote, river otter, beaver, raptors, waterfowl, chukars, sage grouse and redband trout. The WSA is predominantly natural with less than three percent impacted by human imprints. These imprints include 1.3 miles of cherry-stem roads, one mile of way and widely dispersed rangeland developments including a fence and three livestock water reservoirs.

In the canyon portion of the WSA, imprints are lacking except for an historic ruin. Two primitive dirt roads can be seen from small parts of the canyon.

B. Solitude

The WSA's outstanding opportunities for solitude are attributed to the isolated, intimate seclusion of canyonlands and the vastness of seemingly undisturbed desert plateau lands and distant mountain ranges.

The meandering character of the canyons and water courses provide excellent topographic screening between visitor groups traveling close together. The depth of the canyons combined with limited viewing distances creates a sense of seclusion. The length of canyons allows visitors to easily find campsites which are away from others and to adjust their rates of travel to avoid other groups while floating or hiking.

From many high points on the plateau, hundreds to thousands of square miles of open spaces can be seen stretching from Steens Mountain in Oregon to Juniper Mountain in Idaho and southward to the Bull Run Mountains of Nevada. These vast open spaces instill a sense of separation from civilization.

Solitude is sometimes disrupted by military aircraft. The southwest corner of Idaho is a military operations area (MOA) for training military pilots in low elevation, subsonic flight in mostly fighter-bomber type aircraft. Flights occur at elevations as low as 100 feet. Due to the variation in flight patterns and schedules over this large area, impacts upon the solitude vary greatly. At times, jets can be seen and/or heard flying all day. Other times, one can travel for several days and not see or hear a military jet.

C. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

The natural features also contribute to outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation found in the WSA. The scenic natural features and diversity of rugged landforms attract people interested in hunting, backpacking and river running as well as secondary activities of sightseeing, outdoor photography, wildlife viewing, botanical studies and fishing. River running opportunities are of exceptionally high quality and considered nationally significant.

The miles of canyons, their diversely and severely eroded rock landscapes and their steep slopes create a sense of isolation or solitude, thereby enhancing the primitive recreation experience. Visitors traveling in or near the canyons are constantly aware of the forces of nature. Floating or hiking along the river and tributary streams gives a sense of participation in the movement of natural forces.

The challenge and excitement of whitewater rapids add significantly to the boating experience. Hiking the rugged canyons and plateau without the aid of established trails provides a natural and arduous recreational challenge which heightens the primitive experience.

The numerous talus slopes of the canyons encourage travel both near the river and on the plateau. Recreational use of the plateau would concentrate near the canyon rims. These rimrock areas often offer less arduous hiking conditions than those in the canyons and provide opportunities for spectacular vistas of the canyons below. The area of use on the plateau is likely to be fairly wide due to the meandering character of the canyon rimrock and major side drainages. The canyon system can be seen from many plateau areas. Hiking on the plateau provides an opportunity to experience vast open spaces.

D. Special Features

The Yatahoney Creek WSA is rich in special features including scenic, scientific, wildlife and cultural values. The special features contribute significantly to the quality of the wilderness characteristics.

The canyons are of exceptionally high scenic quality. The combination of moving water, colorful sheer cliffs, grass-covered talus slopes and blue sky creates a dramatic beauty. In places, reddish brown cliffs drop hundreds of feet to the water. These fractured, blocky rock monoliths are tinted with brilliant green, yellow and orange microflora. Near the base of the cliffs, water sometimes seeps from the fractures to nourish small, lush, clinging, deep green plant communities. The monoliths are frequently topped with a multitude of diversely eroded spires. The sheer rock walls often give way to steep slopes covered with a mosaic of red rock rubble and subdued green and yellow sagebrush and grasses.

The Owyhee River is nationally known for its whitewater boating. The East Fork Owyhee River within the WSA is a portion of a larger segment of river recommended to Congress for inclusion within the National Wild and Scenic River System.

Sensitive wildlife species found in the WSA include California bighorn sheep, bobcat, river otter and redband trout. Of particular concern is the population of bighorn sheep, a species dependent upon wildland habitat for its survival. California bighorn sheep were successfully reintroduced along the East Fork Owyhee River in the 1960s. An estimated 400 bighorn inhabit the Owyhee Canyonlands WSAs all year around. One sensitive plant species, Packard's sagebrush (*Artemisia packardiae*), is found in the WSA.

The WSA contains both historic and prehistoric archaeological sites. Prehistoric sites are found within the canyons and on the plateau. The historic site is the ruins of a small stone building located on the 40 acre private inholding.

Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System

A. Assessing the Diversity of Natural Systems and Features as Represented by Ecosystems

Wilderness designation of the Yatahoney Creek WSA would not add a new ecosystem to the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS); however, it would add a landform not presently represented in the Sagebrush Steppe Ecosystem. The landform is dominated by rhyolite uplands cut by deep canyons. This ecosystem is represented by three designated areas with 76,699 acres. There are 35 other BLM study areas in the state under study with this ecosystem. This information is summarized on Table 2.

TABLE 2
Ecosystem Representation

Bailey-Kuchler Classification	<u>NWPS Areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	areas	acres	areas	acres
Dry Domain/Intermountain Sagebrush Province				
			<u>NATIONWIDE</u>	
Sagebrush Steppe Ecosystem	3	76,699	136	4,359,340
			<u>IDAHO</u>	
Sagebrush Steppe Ecosystem	1	12,997	35	949,916
			<u>NEVADA</u>	
Sagebrush Steppe Ecosystem	1	32,407	29	1,273,919
			<u>CALIFORNIA</u>	
Sagebrush Steppe Ecosystem	0	0	5	152,431
			<u>OREGON</u>	
Sagebrush Steppe Ecosystem	0	0	67	1,983,074

**B. Expanding the Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive Recreation
Within a Day's Driving Time (Five Hours) of Major Population Centers**

The Yatahoney Creek WSA is within a five-hour drive from Boise, Idaho. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of designated areas and other BLM study areas within a five-hour drive of the population center.

Table 3
**Wilderness Opportunities for Residents
of Major Population Centers**

Population Centers	<u>NWPS Areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	areas	acres	areas	acres
Boise, Idaho	16	4,741,570	141	5,374,250

C. Balancing the Geographic Distribution of Wilderness Areas

The Yatahoney Creek WSA would contribute to balancing the geographic distribution of areas within the NWPS. Regionally, the WSA would add a desert canyon system not found in designated wilderness and would help to balance opportunities to attain diverse wilderness experiences.

Manageability

The area recommended for wilderness designation is manageable in the long term to protect wilderness characteristics. There are no resource uses which could not be adequately controlled or would affect the manageability of the wilderness. The Yatahoney Creek WSA is at least 20 miles from a paved highway. Vehicle access to the WSA is mostly along dirt roads which have received minimal construction and little or no maintenance. Much of the plateau within the WSA is relatively flat but many areas (particularly those close to the canyons) are strewn with rock rubble and impassable to vehicles. Nonfederal inholdings are limited to a 40 acre piece of private property at the bottom of the Owyhee River Canyon. The property is undeveloped except for the ruins of a small stone building. There is no access to the property by road or way.

The portions of the WSA not recommended for wilderness (Areas A and B) are not manageable as wilderness because of problems in restricting motor vehicle use.

Energy and Minerals Resource Values

The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and the Bureau of Mines (BM) prepared a mineral assessment for the WSA in 1986. The assessment found that the WSA has a low resource potential for lead, tin and diatomite and an unknown resource potential for oil and gas.

The Yatahoney Creek WSA contains no known mines, claims or prospects. The southern part and the northeast corner of the area are covered by oil and gas leases or lease applications but no exploration has occurred. Just south of the WSA near the gas pipeline, there is a small outcrop of diatomaceous earth but no exploration has occurred. The likelihood of the occurrence of any mineral resource is extremely remote.

In 1989, a 60-day public review of the USGS/BM mineral survey report for the WSA was conducted. During the review, comments were submitted which resulted in follow-up consideration by the USGS. Based on this reevaluation, the USGS upgraded the mineral potential rating from low to moderate for undiscovered resources of low-grade, epithermal hot-spring gold and silver deposits in the WSA.

Impacts on Resources

The following comparative impact table summarizes the effects on pertinent resources for all alternatives considered including designation or nondesignation of the entire area as wilderness.

Table 4
Comparative Summary of the Impacts by Alternative
WSA ID-16-49D (YATAHONEY CREEK)

ISSUE TOPICS	PROPOSED ACTION	NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE (NO WILDERNESS)	CANYONLANDS WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE	WILDLIFE WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE	ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE
Impacts on Wilderness Values	<p>WILDERNESS (9,550 acres) No significant change in naturalness or solitude/primitive recreation opportunities on 9,475 acres from management actions. Slight enhancement in naturalness and primitive recreation on plateau from improved grazing practices and prescribed burning and from the closure of 2 miles of roads/ways to recreation use. Continued rangeland facility maintenance, however, to prevent complete rehabilitation of vehicle routes. Utility corridor construction activities on adjacent nonwilderness lands to cause a loss of naturalness and primitive recreation opportunities on 75 wilderness acres. Some localized reduction in naturalness from trampling of river campsite vegetation by recreation use. Recreation use per annum in 20 years to reach 203 user days for boating, 100 user days for other activities. Such use not to affect solitude/primitive recreation opportunities overall nor naturalness away from river shoreline.</p> <p>NONWILDERNESS (440 acres) No significant change in naturalness or solitude/primitive recreation use on 810 acres. Loss of naturalness and primitive recreation opportunities on 200 acres from drill seeding land treatments. Loss of naturalness and primitive recreation opportunities on 28 acres from utility corridor construction activities. Recreation use to be at 15 user days and not to affect naturalness or solitude/primitive recreation opportunities.</p>	<p>NONWILDERNESS (9,990 acres) No significant change in naturalness or solitude/primitive recreation opportunities on 9,350 acres from management actions. Slight improvement in naturalness and primitive recreation opportunities on plateau from improved grazing practices and prescribed burning except on 200 acres. Naturalness and primitive recreation opportunities lost on 200 acres from drill seeding land treatments. Recreation use per annum in 20 years to reach 203 user days for boating, 90 user days for backpacking and 145 user days for other activities. Such use not to affect naturalness or solitude/primitive recreation opportunities overall but some localized reduction in naturalness from the trampling of river campsites by recreation use.</p> <p>NO ACTION SUBALTERNATIVE Impacts under the Subalternative would be the same as those under the No Action Alternative except an additional 103 acres to have naturalness and solitude/primitive recreation opportunities lost by utility corridor construction activities.</p>	<p>WILDERNESS (2,000 acres) No significant change in naturalness or solitude/primitive recreation opportunities on 2,000 acres from management actions. Some localized reduction in naturalness at river campsites due to vegetation trampling by recreation use. Recreation use per annum in 20 years to reach 203 user days for boating, 60 user days for backpacking and 45 user days for other activities. This use not to impact solitude/primitive recreation opportunities overall nor naturalness away from river shoreline.</p> <p>NONWILDERNESS (7,990 acres) No significant change in naturalness or solitude/primitive recreation opportunities on 7,790 acres. Slight enhancement of naturalness and primitive recreation opportunities from improved grazing practices and prescribed burning. Loss of naturalness and primitive recreation on 200 acres from drill seeding land treatments and on 103 acres from utility corridor construction activities. Recreation use per annum to reach 130 user days (30 user days for backpacking and 100 user days for other activities) in 20 years and would have no affect on naturalness or on solitude/primitive recreation opportunities.</p>	<p>WILDERNESS (9,550 acres) Impacts the same as those described under the Proposed Action.</p> <p>NONWILDERNESS (440 acres) Impacts the same as those described under the Proposed Action except recreation use to reach 20 user days per annum in 20 years and have no impact on naturalness or solitude/primitive recreation opportunities.</p>	<p>WILDERNESS (9,990 acres) No significant change in naturalness or solitude/primitive recreation opportunities on 9,900 acres from management actions. Slight enhancement in naturalness and primitive recreation opportunities on plateau from improved grazing practices and prescribed burning. Recreation use per annum in 20 years to reach 203 user days for boating, 100 user days for backpacking and 120 user days for other activities. Such use not to affect naturalness or solitude/primitive recreation opportunities overall but some localized reduction in naturalness from the trampling of river campsites by recreation use.</p>
Impacts on the Condition and Amount of Native Vegetation (continued on next page)	<p>WILDERNESS Ecological condition of native plant communities improved on 7,160 acres and retained in good condition on 2,390 acres by grazing practices.</p>	<p>NONWILDERNESS Ecological condition of native plant communities improved on 7,525 acres and retained in good condition on 2,390 acres by grazing practices.</p>	<p>WILDERNESS Ecological condition of native plant communities retained in good condition on 2,000 acres.</p>	<p>WILDERNESS Ecological condition of native plant communities improved on 7,160 acres and retained in good condition on 2,390 acres by grazing practices.</p>	<p>WILDERNESS Ecological condition of native plant communities improved on 7,600 acres and retained in good condition on 2,390 acres by grazing practices.</p>

ISSUE TOPICS	PROPOSED ACTION	NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE (NO WILDERNESS)	CANYONLANDS WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE	WILDLIFE WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE	ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE
Impacts on the Condition and Amount of Native Vegetation (continued) (Yatahoney Creek WSA)	NONWILDERNESS Ecological condition of native plant communities improved on 362 acres by grazing practices. Native plants displaced by seeding on 75 acres. Utility corridor construction activities permanently remove additional 3 acres.	Native plants displaced on 75 acres by seeding. NO ACTION SUBALTERNATIVE Impacts the same as No Action Alternative except 3 acres of vegetation displaced by utility corridor construction activities.	NONWILDERNESS Ecological condition of native plant communities improved on 7,522 acres and retained in good condition on 290 acres from grazing practices. Native plants displaced on 75 acres by seeding. Vegetation displaced on additional 3 acres by utility corridor construction activities.	NONWILDERNESS Ecological condition of native plant communities improved on 362 acres. Native plants displaced on 75 acres by seeding. Vegetation also displaced on 3 acres by utility corridor construction activities.	
Impacts on Selected Wildlife Populations (Bighorn Sheep, Mule Deer, Antelope and Sage Grouse)	WILDERNESS/ NONWILDERNESS Increased recreation use to have minimal impact to wildlife populations. Only localized temporary wildlife displacement expected during periods of recreation activity. Road/way closures would reduce potential for wildlife disturbance from recreational vehicle use. Increased forage availability and enhanced overall habitat condition resulting from improved grazing practices, reservoir maintenance, prescribed burning and seeding on plateau would increase wildlife populations. Utility corridor construction would cause only temporary displacement of wildlife populations.	NONWILDERNESS/ NO ACTION SUBALTERNATIVE Increased recreation use to have minimal impact to wildlife populations. Only localized temporary wildlife displacement expected during periods of recreation activity. Increased forage availability and enhanced overall habitat condition resulting from improved grazing practices, reservoir maintenance, prescribed burning and seeding on plateau would increase wildlife populations. However, increased livestock numbers would compete with and reduce potential wildlife populations. Utility corridor construction would cause only temporary displacement of wildlife populations.	WILDERNESS/ NONWILDERNESS Impacts the same as those of the No Action Alternative.	WILDERNESS Impacts the same as those of the Proposed Action. NONWILDERNESS Increased livestock numbers on unsuitable lands would compete with and reduce potential wildlife populations.	WILDERNESS Increased recreation use to have minimal impact to wildlife populations. Only localized temporary wildlife displacement expected during periods of recreation activity. Road/way closures would reduce potential for wildlife disturbance from recreational vehicle use. Increased forage availability and enhanced overall habitat condition resulting from improved grazing practices, reservoir maintenance and prescribed burning would increase wildlife populations.
Impacts on Semi-Primitive Motorized Recreation Use	WILDERNESS/ NONWILDERNESS 2 miles of interior roads/ways within wilderness closed to recreational vehicle use. Semi-primitive motorized recreation use to reach 115 user days annually in 20 years for hunting, sightseeing, rockhounding or camping in association with WSA boundary roads.	NONWILDERNESS/ NO ACTION SUBALTERNATIVE All interior roads/ways left open for semi-primitive motorized recreation use. Use to reach 145 user days annually in 20 years for hunting, sightseeing, rockhounding or camping.	WILDERNESS/ NONWILDERNESS There are no road/ways within canyon wilderness to be closed to recreational vehicle use. Annual use in 20 years to reach 145 user days for hunting, sightseeing, rockhounding or camping along plateau roads/ways.	WILDERNESS/ NONWILDERNESS 2 miles of interior roads/ways closed to recreational vehicle use within wilderness. Semi-primitive motorized recreation use to reach 120 user days per annum in 20 years for hunting, sightseeing, rockhounding or camping in association with WSA boundary roads.	WILDERNESS Impacts the same as those described for the Wildlife Wilderness Alternative.
Impacts on Livestock Use	WILDERNESS/ NONWILDERNESS Annual livestock use to remain at 800 AUMs over next 20 years on WSA lands.	NONWILDERNESS/ NO ACTION SUBALTERNATIVE Annual livestock use to increase from 800 AUMs to 970 AUMs within 20 years on WSA lands.	WILDERNESS/ NONWILDERNESS Annual livestock use to increase from 800 AUMs to 970 AUMs within 20 years on WSA lands.	WILDERNESS/ NONWILDERNESS Annual livestock use to remain at 800 AUMs over next 20 years on WSA lands.	WILDERNESS Annual livestock use to remain at 800 AUMs over next 20 years on WSA lands.
Impacts on Soil Erosion (continued on next page)	WILDERNESS/ NONWILDERNESS Road/way closures within wilderness to reduce associated soil erosion by 11 tons per year. Improved grazing practices combined with prescribed	NONWILDERNESS Improved grazing practices combined with prescribed burning and seeding and a modest projected increases in livestock use to result in a 5%	WILDERNESS/ NONWILDERNESS Improved grazing practices combined with prescribed burning and seeding and with a modest projected increase in livestock use to cause a	WILDERNESS/ NONWILDERNESS Impacts the same as those described under the Proposed Action.	WILDERNESS Road/way closures to reduce associated soil erosion by 11 tons per year. Improved grazing practices combined with prescribed burning and no projected increase in

ISSUE TOPICS	PROPOSED ACTION	NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE (NO WILDERNESS)	CANYONLANDS WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE	WILDLIFE WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE	ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE
Impacts on Soil Erosion (continued) (Yatahoney Creek WSA)	burning and seeding and no projected increase in livestock use to result in a 5-15% reduction in soil erosion on 7,990 acres of plateau. Utility corridor construction and mainte- nance to cause soil ero- sion of 4.4 tons per year.	reduction in soil erosion on plateau. NO ACTION SUBALTERNATIVE Impacts the same as No Action Alternative except utility corridor construc- tion and maintenance to cause soil erosion of 4.4 tons per year.	5% reduction in soil ero- sion on wilderness pla- teau. Utility corridor con- struction and mainte- nance to cause soil ero- sion of 4.4 tons per year.		livestock use to result in 5-15% reduction in soil erosion on plateau.
Impacts on Water Quality	WILDERNESS/ NONWILDERNESS Suspended sediment loads in WSA tributary streams reduced by as much as 15%. Owyhee River sediment load not measurably affected.	NONWILDERNESS/ NO ACTION SUBALTERNATIVE Suspended sediment loads in WSA tributary streams reduced by 5%. Owyhee River sediment load not measurably affected.	WILDERNESS/ NONWILDERNESS Impacts the same as the No Action Alternative.	WILDERNESS/ NONWILDERNESS Impacts the same as the Proposed Action.	WILDERNESS Impacts the same as the Proposed Action.
Impacts on Local Income and Jobs	WILDERNESS/ NONWILDERNESS Income and employment data by individual WSA is not available. For Owyhee Canyonlands WSA com- plex as a whole, the Pro- posed Action would con- tribute to a .3% increase in income and a .3% in- crease in employment over the next 20 years from livestock and recrea- tional use of the WSAs in the 3-county area (Owyhee, Malheur and Elko Counties).	NONWILDERNESS/ NO ACTION SUBALTERNATIVE Both income and employ- ment from WSA complex up .4% in 20 years.	WILDERNESS/ NONWILDERNESS Both income and employ- ment from WSA complex up .4% in 20 years.	WILDERNESS/ NONWILDERNESS Both income and employ- ment from WSA complex up .3% in 20 years.	WILDERNESS From WSA complex, in- come up .2% and employ- ment up .3%.

Local Social and Economic Considerations

Designation of 9,550 acres as wilderness would have no significant social or economic impacts on the local communities of Owyhee County. The impact to local income and jobs was an issue analyzed in the study of the Yatahoney Creek WSA.

Summary of WSA-Specific Public Comments

Public involvement has occurred throughout the wilderness review process. Certain comments received during the inventory process were considered in developing issues and various management alternatives. During the wilderness inventory for the Yatahoney Creek roadless unit, three public comments supported the establishment of a WSA and one opposed it. Supporting comments stated the area possessed the characteristics necessary to be considered for wilderness as well as supplemental values such as wildlife, scenic, vegetation and cultural resources. The opposing comment said the area did not have significant wilderness characteristics and that "multiple use" would be better served if the area was released from further wilderness review.

During the public review of the Owyhee and Bruneau Management Framework Plans, 51 out of 55 comments supported wilderness designation for the Owyhee Canyonlands WSA complex with no specific comments on the Yatahoney Creek WSA. Comments in support of wilderness designation were primarily justified on the need for long-term protection of the high quality wilderness characteristics and special features of both the canyons and the plateau. Comments opposed to wilderness designation addressed a perception that "multiple use" would provide greater public benefit, that wilderness was not multiple use, and that public benefits could be optimized more effectively through a wild river designation of the Owyhee River and with the further development of livestock and potential mineral/energy resources on the plateau and in the Owyhee River's tributary canyons.

During the public comment period on the Draft Owyhee Canyonlands Wilderness EIS, 448 written or oral comments supported all WSAs or portions of all WSAs in the Owyhee Canyonlands complex as wilderness, 46 comments opposed any wilderness in the WSA complex and 23 comments had no position. Those in support of wilderness for the Yatahoney Creek WSA were mostly in favor of designating the entire WSA as wilderness. Support for the entire WSA as wilderness was based upon a desire to see wildlife, vegetation and other natural resources protected in the long term. Opposition to any of the WSA becoming wilderness was based upon a desire for improved livestock management opportunities, the need for continued use of the area for motorized recreation, the need to have further opportunities for the exploration and possible development of mineral and energy resources and the need to potentially develop utility corridors.

Eleven government agencies commented on this WSA. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Idaho Department of Fish and Game supported wilderness designation to protect wildlife habitat; the Bonneville Power Administration did not object to wilderness provided there were adequate utility corridor options; the Department of the Air Force supported wilderness if no significant restrictions were placed on military overflights; and the Idaho Air National Guard opposed wilderness because of conflicts with its tactical flight training mission. The Bureau of Reclamation had no objection to wilderness designation while the Shoshone-Paiute Tribes stated the wilderness would prohibit construction of irrigation dams. The Owyhee County Commissioners opposed wilderness designation but supported national wild river designation for the Owyhee River. The Federal Aviation Agency, Soil Conservation Service and Environmental Protection Agency took no position.

Subsequent to the May 31, 1984, conclusion of the public comment period for the Draft Owyhee Canyonlands Wilderness EIS, but prior to the completion of the Final EIS, 78 written comments were received. One of the comments opposed any wilderness designation in the WSA complex, one took no position and 76 supported wilderness designation. Of the wilderness advocates, 61 supported designating the entire Yatahoney Creek WSA as wilderness. Most of this wilderness support was in response to a flyer sent out by the Committee for Idaho's High Desert and to an "alert" in the Sierra Club.

APPENDIX I -- YATAHONEY CREEK WSA
Estimated Costs of Acquisition of Nonfederal Holdings
Within Areas Recommended for Designation(1)

Legal Description	Total Acreage	Number of Owners	Type of Ownership by Estate	Type of Ownership by Estate	Presently Proposed for Acquisition	Preferred Method of Acquisition	Estimated Cost of Acquisition	Estimated Cost of Acquisition
			Surface Estate	Subsurface Estate			Land Costs (in \$)	Processing Costs (in \$)
Parcel No. 1 T. 14 S., R. 1 W. Sec. 19 NE1/4NW1/4	40	1	Private	Private	Yes	Exchange	N/A	2,000
Parcel No. 2 T. 14 S., R. 2 W. Sec. 2 SW1/4NE1/4 NW1/4SE1/4, N1/2SW1/4	160	1	Private	Private	Yes	Exchange	N/A	2,000

(1)The estimated costs listed in this appendix in no way represent a formal appraised value of the land or mineral estate but are rough estimates based on sales or exchanges of lands or mineral estates with similar characteristics to those included in the WSA. The estimates are for purposes of establishing a range of potential costs to the government of acquiring nonfederal holdings and in no way represent an offer to purchase or exchange at the cost estimate included in this appendix.